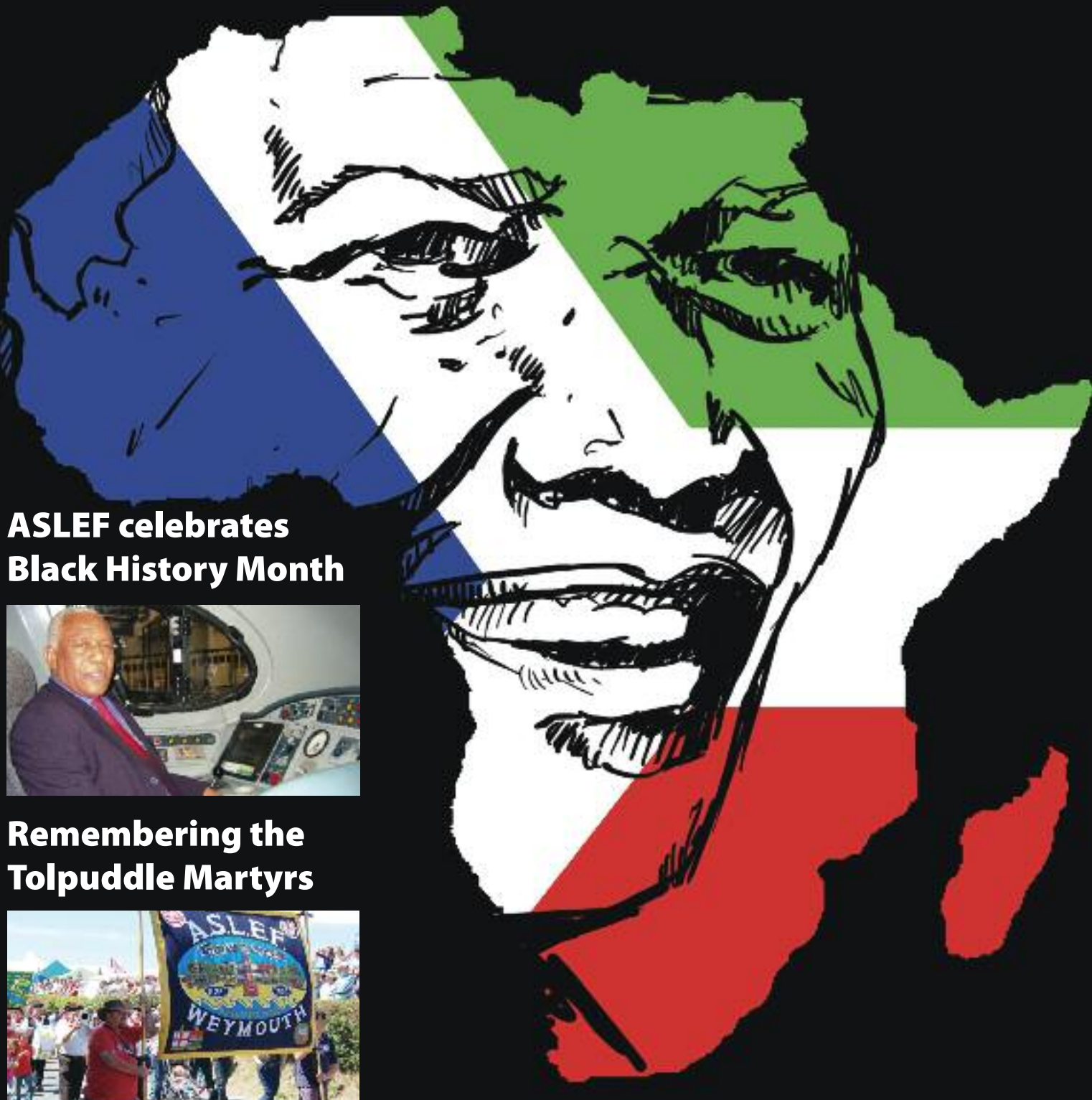




ASLEF

PUBLISHED BY THE ASSOCIATED SOCIETY OF LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND FIREMEN

JOURNAL
SEPTEMBER 2010



ASLEF celebrates Black History Month



Remembering the Tolpuddle Martyrs



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can safeguard the railway

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assaults on unions

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Health, wealth and greedy bankers

FIRSTLY I want to express my warmest thanks to the many friends and colleagues who sent me messages of encouragement and support when they heard of my recent heart surgery. It is when you are faced with difficult times that you appreciate the great human bond of trade unionism. I was deeply moved by your concern and thank each and every one of you.

As I return to health I am acutely aware of the terrible torments of our soldiers wounded in Afghanistan. I am haunted by the image of that brave young soldier who, only a few weeks after being pictured with David Beckham on his good-will mission, stood on a booby-trap and had to have both his legs amputated. His spine, jaw and eye socket were fractured. His active life is over.

Whatever our views on the Afghan conflict, while it continues we have an obligation to ensure our soldiers have the very best equipment – regardless of cost. They are fighting for their country, and their country must provide for them as best it can. That is why I am appalled to hear of soldiers with inadequate equipment or back-up, the result of cut-backs or the need for us all to ‘tighten our belts’.

It is certainly not a concept accepted by the banking fraternity. Bankers nearly destroyed our national economy in their greedy pursuit of personal wealth. They should be hanging their heads in shame. But instead, as soldiers die - bankers party. Last month saw a ‘festival for bankers’ celebrating ‘the start of economic recovery’ at an event organised by the ‘Square Mile’ magazine. Bankers from Barclays, Credit Suisse, JP Morgan, and HSBC guzzled champagne and indulged themselves with ‘burlesque’ dancers, singers, casino tables and free massages.

It is an outrage that while soldiers died for lack of equipment, Barclays’ bill for salaries and bonuses for investment bankers reached almost £3 billion. It is a sick society where greed is rewarded, and sacrifice is treated with contempt.

Keith Norman
General Secretary



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✉ 9 Arkwright Road London NW3 6AB ☎ 020 7317 8600

📠 020 7794 6406 📧 journal@aslef.org.uk 🌐 www.aslef.org.uk

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**More than
just a union**

Potters Bar inquest blames maintenance

THE jury at last month's inquest into the 2002 Potters Bar derailment in which seven people died and over 70 were injured has concluded that the crash was the result of a points failure caused by their unsafe condition. It concluded that there were failures of inspection and/or maintenance of the points and confirmed that no blame was attached to the driver.

ASLEF's general secretary Keith Norman said, 'This terrible incident makes it imperative that we continuously examine the relationship between cuts to maintenance routines that jeopardise safety standards and the vast sums of money taken out of our industry by privatisation. ASLEF members rely on proper maintenance not



only for our livelihoods, but for our lives.

'We are obviously pleased that the driver in this case was cleared of all blame but one of our members, Driver Begley, who drove along this stretch of track only a few hours before the fatal derailment, told us that a warning had been given the previous night about a 'rough ride over this part of the track', but no other action was taken.'

"They went because their open eyes could see no other way"

ON the 3rd July, the British Battalion were remembered at the annual International Brigade memorial service in Jubilee Gardens. Dave Johnson, Steve Richardson and Marz Colombini represented the Waterloo Nine Elms branch. Also in attendance were Nigel Gibson (EC member for district no. 5) and sister Jeanette Wood from Reading branch. It was a pleasure to see 'Netty' aid Dave in laying our branch wreath. After observing a minute's silence Geoff Lawes sang the 'Clem Beckett song'.

Clem Beckett was born in Oldham in

1906 and at the age of 13 he became a Blacksmith, before riding the 'dome of death' at fairgrounds. After breaking many world records, he became a speedway star. Clem rode for Halifax, Sheffield, Belle Vue and White City. In those days, young kids were persuaded to ride irrespective of their experience; and many were killed or seriously injured. Clem Beckett played a major part in setting up a trade union for riders to fight unscrupulous promoters, which led to his license being revoked.

Beckett's hatred of fascism prompted him to ride the wall

of death in Spain. On February 12th 1937, Clem and his friend (the poet Christopher Caudwell) took control of a machine-gun at the Battle of Jarama. At the end of the day, only two-hundred and twenty-five out of the original six-hundred members of the British Battalion were left. Clem and Chris kept their machine-gun trained on the advancing fascists, as a cover for retreat. The advance was halted but both were killed.

Not only did Clem stand by his post, he stood by his class!

Steve Richardson, Assistant Secretary, Waterloo Nine Elms

Newsinbrief

○ RICKMANSWORTH DRIVERS OUT

Seventy-seven ASLEF tube train drivers took strike action last month after one of their number – a driver with a 33 year unblemished record – was unfairly dismissed from train driving.

National Organiser Simon Weller called the sanction 'totally unfair'. 'The problem was caused by safety deficiencies, especially concerning mirrors, which we had reported regularly to management', he said. 90% of those who voted were in favour of industrial action..

○ IRAQ CRACKS DOWN ON UNIONS

The TUC says the Iraqi government continues to crack down on trade unions across the country. Last month Iraqi police shut the premises of unions working in the country's electricity industry.

TUC general secretary Brendan Barber says the Iraqi government is 'making criminals of union employees using the country's Terrorism Act'. He says they are moves that Saddam Hussein would have been proud of.

Asking the UK government to raise the issue, Brendan says, 'Unions in Iraq have a vital role to play in rebuilding the country. They are one of the few forces that unite people regardless of tribal, ethnic or religious boundaries, in striving for a peaceful, prosperous and democratic Iraq.'

○ SCRAP IN COMMONS



When Hartlepool MP Iain Wright asked Transport minister Theresa Villiers what she was doing about cable theft close to railway lines in the North East, she told him metal theft was 'a crime which hits the railway particularly hard and causes levels of disruption out of all proportion to the value of the material stolen'. She said the British Transport Police had led a national day of action on 14 July aimed at targeting both thieves and the scrap yards where they sold the stolen material.

○ EARLY DAY MOTIONS IN PARLIAMENT

Diane Abbott has put down Early Day Motions in Parliament about railway pensions and rail franchising. The first (EDM 561) supports the rail unions call for our pension contributions to be restricted to an affordable level and calls on the Department for Transport to help any transition to new, affordable pension arrangements within the railway industry.

In the second (EDM 563), ASLEF-backed MP Diane supports union criticisms of franchising consultation and calls for 'any further proposals on rail franchising to be made public to allow passengers the chance to comment'.

○ TRANSPORT FOR LONDON BUDGET CUTS



Transport for London faces its biggest shake-up as huge government spending cuts look set to cut up to £1.2 billion from its annual budget. In a leaked internal memo Transport Commissioner Peter Hendy warns TfL's staff that the Comprehensive Spending Review in October will have "very significant effects on what we do and how we do it", adding: "We are faced with having to sustain a considerable reduction in our funding."

Marking Tolpuddle's Martyrs

A SLEF members came from all over the country to last month's Tolpuddle Festival, the celebration of trade union history and values that takes place every year in the small Dorset town. The festival marks the events of the 1830s when six agricultural workers bound themselves to a 'Friendly Society of Agricultural Labourers' and swore to defend themselves collectively against unscrupulous employers.

They were shortly afterwards accused, tried and deported to Australia for their audacity in challenging the authority of their masters - despite the fact that officially 'combining' or organising to improve working conditions was legal, the Combination Acts having been repealed in 1825.

The memory of these brave and principled men and their high ideals was marked by members from ASLEF districts, head office and branches including Brighton, Bristol, Kings Cross, Northam, Southern Region, Stratford and Weymouth

Thanks to Alan Loughlin for the photos ...



(L-R) Siimon Weller- National Organizer, Graham Morris- District Organizer, District 1, Marz Colombini- EC member, District 1



Kings Cross marched just in front of the Brighton branch



Bristol's blue banner marks it out from the crowd



Stratford branch is to the fore in the summer sun



Weymouth branch were followed by a brass band!



A rural setting for the Southern Region banner



Northam's new banner with appropriately young marchers

ASLEF - active at Hazards conference

A report of the 2010 Hazards Conference from Alan Moss of Longsight Branch

PERHAPS the most moving event of the Hazards weekend conference was a screening of the newly produced DVD for Families Against Corporate Killers (FACK), which ASLEF was instrumental in setting up. FACK campaigns to stop workers being killed in preventable incidents and to direct bereaved families to sources of legal help and emotional support. I urge all Journal readers to check out the organisation's website (www.hazardscampaign.org.uk/fack/index.htm) because it illustrates the appalling loss of life caused by the negligence of employers. There wasn't a sound in the hall as the film was shown.

After this sobering beginning the ASLEF delegates spent the evening networking with representatives from other unions. No matter how long you've been a safety rep, there are always things to learn about best practice from your union colleagues.

Saturday saw us split into workshops aimed at enhancing our abilities to carry out our duties professionally and efficiently. The ones I chose were on shiftwork and facilities for safety reps.

In the 'Shiftwork and Health' seminar we discussed and debated numerous issues around night working, examined the link between fatigue, illness and shift work and dissected the Working

Time Regulations which led to lively debate.

I benefited most from the workshop on the rights of representatives, time off and facilities. Using the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees (SRSC) Regulations as our guide we compiled lists of our objectives and defined how we could achieve them. Some delegates began by lamenting what they considered insurmountable issues, but after the workshop they were armed with the necessary tools and were full of confidence to address their issues.

Two major themes emerged from all the debates: a lack of understanding and knowledge by local managers - and the ability to challenge and question their decisions. I'm sure a large number of people left the conference with the confidence and assertiveness to make changes that will benefit the members they represent.

Our final Sunday sessions were spent organising campaigning meetings on issues like enforcement, stress and safety and collating information for the Hazards team to take forward and adopt as best practice.

I'd like to thank my fellow ASLEF delegates, the Hazards team, the EC for supporting my nomination, my branch for their support, my full time officer Kevin Lindsay for securing my release to attend and finally my branch members who support my role at the coalface. This conference gave our delegates the confidence, information and arguments to tackle the many challenges and obstacles we face in the future.

ASLEF was one of 17 unions who sponsored the conference nationally. It was also supported by ASLEF's district 3 and the following branches: Banbury, Bishops Stortford, Chingford, East Ham, Kings Cross, Kirkdale, Leeds, Longsight, Manchester Piccadilly, Neasden, Nottingham, Preston, St Pancras, Three Bridges and Waterloo / Nine Elms.



ASLEF's delegates were Alan Moss (Longsight), Paul Hutchinson (York), ASLEF's national safety advisor Dave Bennett, Michael Carroll (Kings Cross) and Neil Lycett (Bescot)

SafetyShorts

FIRST ORR REPORT STRESSES UK RAIL IS SAFE

The first health and safety report from rail regulator ORR stresses that the UK has 'one of the safest railways in Europe' but warns that there is no room for complacency. The report from the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) defines and cites best practice and highlights areas for attention. To view the health and safety report in full, visit: www.rail-reg.gov.uk/server/show/nav.2457

LEGAL REVIEW OF LEVEL CROSSINGS

ASLEF is submitting evidence to a review being carried out by the Law Commission and Scottish Law Commission which is aimed at recommending changes to the law on level crossings.

There are between 7,500 and 8,000 level crossings over the network and the Commission says current level crossings law is 'complex, outdated and difficult to access, creates problems for regulators, owners and operators and increases the safety risk for users'.

BURNS AFTER FALL ON LIVE RAIL

A 16-year old boy was lucky to escape with burns when he fell off a platform onto a live rail at Swaythling station in Southampton last month. The third live rail carries 750 volts of electricity and is permanently active. A transport police spokesperson said the incident was 'an important reminder of the need to take care when near railway lines'.

RSSB PROVIDE MOBILE PHONE ADVICE FOR DRIVERS

The RSSB is preparing an education programme for train drivers which will be available later this month. The programme will deal with

- Risks of mobile phone distraction
- Benefits of mobiles to drivers
- Reminders of specific company policies
- Advises on when to use a mobile, and when it's best to wait
- Other practical tips



Inside the hall of 'union safety's parliament'



'Miracle' escape for driver in 100 mph crash

A Plymouth driver walked away from his train with only a fractured wrist and a few cuts after it crashed into a fallen tree at 100mph. He slammed on the brakes of the First Great Western service from London Paddington to Penzance when he saw the obstruction on the line near the disused Lavington station in Wiltshire. The cab window was shattered as the train collided

into the tree.

After a two-hour delay a shunter pushed the carriages into nearby Westbury Station, where off-duty staff opened the cafe for the 200 stranded passengers.

District Organiser Stan Moran said he was 'immensely relieved' that the driver had suffered only minor injuries. 'The impact could easily have killed him,' he said.

Skills Minister presents Quality Awards

SPEAKING at Learning 4 Life, unionlearn's annual conference in London, John Hayes, Minister for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning paid tribute to the contribution of unions and their partners to raising skills in the workplace. Presenting the awards with Brendan Barber, TUC general secretary, he said: 'These quality awards provide a clear signpost to both learners and employers of where they can find good learning. And that's why I'm so pleased to be here and to have this chance to offer my congratulations in person to this year's award-winners.'

The unionlearn Quality Award is awarded to providers in the learning world who are



Peta Fee, Mark Walker, Nigel Leigh (all Stephenson College), John Hayes MP, Brendan Barber (TUC)

committed to working with trade unions and are providing inclusive, innovative programmes representing good practice and providing top quality information and advice.

Stephenson College of Coalville, Leicestershire was presented with a Quality Award for their model of delivery in Skills for Life at East Midlands Trains and in recognition of the successful partnership with the rail unions, ASLEF, RMT and TSSA.

Get behind 500 for travel facilities

THE union is calling on members to persuade their MPs to back Parliamentary Early Day Motion 500 which calls for 'equal, free and improved travel facilities'.

The motion says, 'That this House acknowledges that train drivers who entered employment in the railways before 1 April 1996 are safeguarded and eligible for the full range of former British Rail travel facilities for themselves and their families; notes that those who entered the industry after 31 March 1996 are entitled to restricted facilities on an individual train

operating company basis; is perplexed that a train driver from Spain or France is entitled to free travel across the UK rail network yet a British driver employed after 1996 is not; believes that all train drivers and their families, irrespective of service, should receive equal, free and improved travel facilities which may be multi-modal; and calls on the Secretary of State for Transport to urge the Association of Train Operating Companies to ensure a more equal and improved system of travel facilities provision is introduced forthwith.'

Tube Lines pay deal accepted

FOLLOWING an overwhelming vote for industrial action in response to the company's initial pay offer of 1%, the following three-year offer was accepted by our members in Tube Lines without the need for action:

In year one – beginning 1 April 2010 - there will be a 4.2% increase to base salary. Half a percent

results from a productivity deal relating to Train Driver Assistants. This will have no detrimental effect on current staff and little, if any, on new employees.

In year two we have secured increases of the greater of the Retail Price Index (RPI) for January 2011 plus half a percent; or half

a per cent.

In year three the deal will be the same as year two, but using the RPI figure for January 2012.

'I'd like to thank the membership for showing such resolute backing for the negotiators,' says London EC member Terry Wilkinson. 'They are the reason we reached a settlement.'

Thumbs up from new rep course



WHEN new local reps are elected they are normally released from duty to attend two-stage courses provided by the TUC. However these courses are necessarily very broad as they cover a variety of industries and professions. That's why our union decided to run ASLEF-specific courses as an alternative – and why reps from London and the South East were invited to be the 'guinea pigs' for a new two-day course at Arkwright Road.

The experience of the reps on the course varied but over the two days we managed to cover the structure of ASLEF, methods of communication and how to represent and negotiate on members' behalf. We also touched on common procedures and agreements and discussed 'tricks' used across companies. It was rather worrying that during role play, a few people adapted rather too easily to the management role!

Report by Chris Hayes

Executive backs Abbott in Labour leadership race

LAST month's Journal reported on the visits of the Miliband brothers to ASLEF head office where they explained why they were standing and what they felt they had to offer. More recently the executive committee had the opportunity to catch up with the final three candidates – Diane Abbott, Ed Balls and Andy Burnham.

Diane Abbott felt her background gave her an advantage in the most vital task – putting life, enthusiasm and democracy back into the Party. 'I know the party better than the other candidates,' she insisted. 'I've had no parachutes or patronage. I've worked for Labour for 30 years collecting subs, working in local government and finally as an MP – so I know what needs to be changed.'

She has no time for New Labour's stifling of debate. 'People



Diane sits with president Alan Donnelly as she makes her pitch for ASLEF support

felt they couldn't speak out, even in favour of popular policies which Labour should be supporting – like less privatisation, no Trident, putting

rail back in public hands and more investment in public housing.

'I represent a genuine change at a time we need one,' Diane said. 'I want to bring a sense of family back to Labour.'

Andy Burnham declared that Labour leaders became 'dangerously disconnected' from ordinary party members during its time in government. 'At the end they were considered a self-indulgent elite attracted to the rich, powerful and glamorous,' he said. 'I want to lead a party that speaks the language of working people and understands and relates to what concerns them.' That was also why he felt we needed to change from an emphasis on London and to stop 'parachuting' political friends in to seats outside the capital.

Andy was also anxious to show the genuine differences between a Labour vision and that of Cameron's 'Cabinet of Millionaires'. This means following Labour's values in things like care for the elderly and opportunities for the young. Of one thing 'aspirational socialist' Andy was certain: 'We can't have more of the same.'

Ed Balls' message was that the next leader should not be chosen on a negative basis. The winner needed positive backing because

they would be 'not only the next Labour leader, but also the next Prime Minister'. Ed stressed the number of local public meetings he'd held in his constituency, one the Tories would dearly have liked to win. 'I heard, and I'm dedicated to, the message that we need to keep in touch with ordinary members. That was our greatest failing in government. People felt we hadn't explained what we were doing or listened carefully to them. That will have to change.'

Ed stressed that he would always be honest with the Party and the public and declared that the key to Labour-union dealings remained 'fairness'. 'No one wants to go back to the 70s,' he said.

ABBOTT RECOMMENDED

After meeting the five candidates, the executive committee recommends Diane Abbott as the first preference to ASLEF members eligible to vote in the contest – that is, either members paying the union's political levy or individual Labour Party members.

General Secretary Keith Norman said the EC had taken this decision because Diane was committed to a publicly run, publicly owned railway, and clearly understood the need for change in trade union laws.

The union also recommends Ed Miliband for their second preference vote.



Ed Balls told the executive the key was to keep in touch with ordinary members



Keith Norman keeps an eye on Andy as he addresses ASLEF's executive committee

MANCHESTER FRINGE MEETINGS AT LABOUR AND TUC

These are details of fringe meetings that will be taking place in September at the TUC and Labour Party Conferences, both of which will be held in Manchester.

◉ TUC FRINGE MEETING

A meeting entitled 'Rail Against the Cuts' will be hosted by our Newton Heath branch, and be chaired by Andy Hourigan. It's taking place on Sunday 12 September at 17.00 in the Vine Inn 42-46 Kennedy St Manchester M2 4BQ.

◉ LABOUR PARTY FRINGE MEETING

A meeting will be held on Monday 27 September at 12.30 in the Galileo Room, Renaissance Marriot, Blackfriars Street on 'Rail Franchising: Cut private profits not services'. Speakers will include Rt Hon Sadiq Khan, Shadow Secretary of State for Transport, Louise Ellman, Chair, Transport Select Committee and Keith Norman, ASLEF General Secretary. It will be chaired by Peter Grant of our Manchester Piccadilly No 1 Branch which is hosting the meeting. All members and friends are welcome to join us. We hope you will.

◉ CONVENTION OF THE LEFT

A 'Convention of the Left' will take place in the city on 24 and 25 September to coincide with the Labour Party conference. It will be in the Friends Meeting House on Mount Street from 18.00 to 21.00 on the first day and 10.00 until 17.00 on the second. For further information contact www.conventionofthelleft.org

Tories plan fresh union attacks



warns Gregor Gall, professor of industrial relations at the University of Hertfordshire

BEFORE and since the General Election, David Cameron promised an era of 'new politics' – but proposals about 'democracy for unions' that are circulating in the Conservative Party smack very much of Thatcherite politics of old.

Two proposals in particular stand out – concerning ballots for industrial action as well as for gaining union recognition. So far, Cameron has said and done nothing to suggest he is against these ideas – so it's reasonable to conclude that he's probably favourably disposed towards them.

ACTION BALLOTS – MORE RESTRICTIONS

The first proposal concerns changing Thatcher's laws on industrial action so that the bar is raised even further. It involves saying that any simple majority for industrial action (a strike or action short of a strike) must also equate to 40% of all those entitled to vote.

Take the example of a workforce of 100 employees. In a ballot for industrial action, 60% of the workers voted for action but on a turnout of 60% this would not equate to 40% of all those entitled to vote. This is because although a simple majority of those that voted for action, this only represented 36% of all those entitled to vote.

The whole point of this proposed change in the law is that those who do not vote are counted as 'no' votes. Clearly the Tories are still



The Tories are a little miffed that the legal compulsion to have postal ballots for industrial action has led to unions winning these ballots



If the proposed change to union balloting was applied to any election for public office – like this year's general election – we would have very different political outcomes

not content with the shackles they placed on unions in the 1980s.

The irony is that strikes are at an all time low since records began in 1891. Indeed, in 2009, there were fewer than 100 strikes.

However, the Tories are a little miffed that the legal compulsion to have postal ballots for industrial action has led to unions winning these ballots when they stage them – and using them successfully as a bargaining chip with employers. It's certainly not what was intended by the then law makers.

But they are also miffed at the strikes that do remain, especially the ones in transport. They remain effective weapons in the armoury of workers because they have an immediate and powerful impact on the employers' operations.

RECOGNITION MADE HARDER

The second proposal, emanating from the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) concerns abolishing the automatic mechanism by which unions can gain a statutory union recognition award (whereby an employer must then recognize the union). Under this mechanism, introduced in 2000, a union has to show that it has a majority of the bargaining unit in membership to gain recognition.

The CBI/Tory proposal is about saying that statutory union recognition can only be gained through a ballot where a simple majority voting for recognition must also equate to 40% of all those entitled to vote for recognition.

The link between the two proposals is basically to count anyone who doesn't vote as a 'no' vote. But it is also about providing employers with the even greater incentives to use their resources to influence ballot results to maintain and protect their interests. And there are no legal restrictions on employers using

fear or favours to get their way.

DISTORTING DEMOCRACY

So Cameron's 'new politics' looks very much like the old-school rule of 'one law for us (the workers) and another law for them (the bosses)'. Cameron's trick is to dress it up in the language of democracy.

On the face of it, what could be more democratic than using ballots to decide things and that a majority should be a majority?

Nothing – if there was a level playing field. But there isn't. Employers have far more power than workers – but they want even more to reinforce their ability to manage as they see fit.

For them, from power comes profit. The more workers are under the cosh, the more they can be exploited and, all other things being equal, the higher employers' profits will be.

The only thing that stands in the way of this is when workers are organized collectively into unions. And with the current economic crisis continuing, profits are more difficult to come by. This merely reinforces the desire of employers to have unions shackled even more so. In the Tory party, employers have willing accomplices.

RULES ONLY APPLY TO UNIONS!

There is a supreme irony in these proposals. If the same principle was applied to any election for public office – like this year's general election – we would have very different political outcomes. Certainly we would have seen coalitions way before the present Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition came into being.

But, of course, the principle is not applied to these elections. Which is another example of 'one law for us – and another law for them'.



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We need smart spending cuts that safeguard the railways

UNDER the Coalition Government's plan to slash the deficit through the deepest spending cuts since the Second World War, the transport sector looks set to be hit hard. Unions, campaign groups and millions of workers are gearing up to fight back, but hefty cuts to the transport budget – from a painful 25% to a disastrous 40% – are likely to be coming down the line in the wake of October's spending review announcement.

Campaign for Better Transport believes that if the axe must fall, we need to get our priorities right. Our Smarter Cuts report sets out how the Department for Transport could go about making 25% cuts to its budget whilst safeguarding public transport. We argue for 'smart cuts' that help improve the economy, environment and communities, rather than easy cuts that simply 'salami slice' all areas.

Without careful thought and a clear recognition of the importance of public transport and railfreight, 25% cuts could have a hugely negative effect on the rail industry and the passengers and workers who depend on it. Train fares could rise by more than a third in the next five years if Government attempted to raise funds by allowing regulated fares to rise 3% rather than 1% above inflation. Cuts in franchise subsidies could drastically reduce

service levels. Overcrowding would increase, and 'holidays' in rail maintenance leading to speed restrictions might have to be imposed, as happened in previous recessions. All of this, of course, is likely to lead to fewer passengers, less freight and job losses.

Instead, Government needs to protect train services and invest in the rail network.

We think the priorities for the railways should be:

- Protecting and enhancing the current network, including maintenance and essential upgrades
- Honouring the Government's commitment to 'fair pricing for rail travel' by ensuring that fares don't continue to rise above inflation each year
- Supporting rail partnerships to increase usage and link rail to local planning
- Tackling overcrowding, adding capacity to address bottlenecks such as Reading Station and (in the longer term) the Northern Hub
- Continued electrification, including the Midland Main Line and other previously announced schemes
- Improving stations, prioritising rather than neglecting those identified in the last Government's report on rail stations, such as Manchester Victoria

● Supporting railfreight growth to get more lorries off the roads, through improving and expanding the Strategic Freight Network and continuing grants to businesses

Our research shows how this can be done while reducing costs, through a mixture of efficiency, innovation, and prioritisation. Much more can be achieved from the investment going into rail, for instance by setting more appropriate standards for local rail lines or better aligning incentives with costs, as well as looking at how to enable more outside investment (by local authorities and others) in things like improving stations. Savings could also be made and UK jobs retained and expanded by refurbishing existing diesel trains and converting some to run on electricity. Revenue could be generated through national marketing of rail services, especially for off-peak travel. Keeping the East Coast franchise in public ownership, and giving local authorities more say over local rail networks such as Merseyrail would allow us to see if these alternative and less fragmented models of delivering rail services could be more cost effective. Equally, we should learn lessons from European railways that cost 30-50% less than our own.

But there's a good argument for saying that the main savings in transport should come from road and air, not rail. Our research shows that cutting expensive new road schemes, which damage the environment and often do not provide good value for money, could save close to £1bn a year – a quarter of the subsidy the government currently provides to the railway. Taxing fuel on domestic flights at the same rate as motoring fuel would raise a further £460 million a year. This would help to cut carbon emissions, noise and pollution and would encourage more people to take the train – further boosting revenue from fares. It would also help to even out the playing field among different modes of travel, given that the cost of taking the train has gone up drastically against the cost of driving or flying.

Spending decisions being made right now could shape the future of transport policy for decades to come. Government has a choice about where and how it cuts and spends, and safeguarding the railways must be a priority – not only for the sake of employees and passengers, but in order to tackle climate change, increase social inclusion, and boost economic development. Campaign for Better Transport will seek to work with ASLEF and other unions, and also with users and voluntary groups, to put pressure on the Government to support rather than cut the railways. In doing so, we can work to create a better railway, which leads to more jobs, more passengers, and a more sustainable future.



Alexandra Woodsworth is Public Transport Campaigner at Campaign for Better Transport

WHY DO WE NEED A SPECIAL MONTH FOR BLACK HISTORY?

This is the question we put to Mia Morris, a woman with a mission to raise Black awareness. She founded the award-winning Well Placed Consultancy which plays a vital role in Black History month as well as offering research, training, development and event management. This is what she had to say ...



Mia Morris is a woman with a mission to raise Black

BLACK people have been invisible in history until now. Think about the history lessons you had at school. What do you remember? Julius Caesar and his invading Romans, William 1 and his Norman conquests, Henry VIII and his wives ... you'd think black people weren't invented until the 1950s! Or if they were mentioned it was in a passive role, being 'helped' or 'saved' by caring white people like William Wilberforce and his work to abolish slavery. It is a terrible self image to pass on to black British children. They start life feeling inferior or even worthless. It makes them see themselves as second class from birth. They have no positive role models from the past.

Yet this is clearly a distortion. Black people have a history quite as rich and interesting as anyone else. But until recently there was no

attempt to tell their story.

Black History Month is a time to tell the truth about what has happened. Apart from being important to black people, it also enriches the story of our country and our civilisation for everyone. It presents a fairer and more equal account of our past.

JUST LISTEN AND YOU HEAR BLACK HISTORY

I remember Ken Livingstone talking at the Albert Hall about music. He spoke about the importance of African influences on medieval and renaissance European music and pointed out that once we recognise these influences 'our accepted ideas about European music are changed'. It's just one aspect of Africa playing a huge role in defining world civilization – it's

where our species of homo sapiens began! – but its contribution has been omitted or distorted in most history books.

That's what we want to change.

The Greater London Council, later abolished by Margaret Thatcher, was at the forefront of the idea of Black History Month. One of the main people pushing it was Akyaba Addai Sebbo, a GLC worker who was stirred into action when a worker recalled her young son wanting to know, 'Why am I not white?' Addai realised that the question stemmed from feelings of insignificance and inferiority partly due to the way this youngster was taught history in his school: a history where his entire race was missing!

Addai picked up on the events that had taken place in the United States since 1926, when



Retired ASLEF driver Donald Sewell has been behind the wheel of steam, diesel, electric and finally Pendolinos

BLACK JOBS?

One result of history showing black people in limited or negative roles can result in a feeling that certain jobs – especially 'the professions' – are somehow 'not for them'. It leads to a form of self-segregation. How many of you have been in the court of a black magistrate? Or have a black MP? Or have been interviewed by a black journalist ...?

PARLIAMENT



- In the House of Commons, out of 650 MP's only 24 are black or ethnic
- Of the House of Lords, 38 of 707 are black.

○ There are just four of Members of the European Parliament.

○ Of the 129 members of the Scottish Parliament only one is from a black or ethnic

TRADE UNIONS



- The TUC has no black or ethnic affiliated union
- The only black person in the leadership of the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE) is Moses, National Union of Public Employees (NUPE)
- the Prison Officers Association (POA) is black and which has
- The only trend-brea Professional Footballer (PFA) whose Deputy Chairman is black and which has



Black awareness. Photo: Angela Cobbinah

historian Carter G Woodson initiated 'Negro History Week' in 1926. The US events take place in February as this is the month of birth of American president Abraham Lincoln and black equalities campaigner Frederick Douglas. October was chosen in the UK because it is a significant month in the African cultural calendar, a period of the coming together of the African Kingdoms and it's the start of the UK school year when children's minds are refreshed and open.

WHAT HAPPENS?

There are over 4,700 Black History events taking place this coming 'extended October' – so many that they've been taking place since July and will continue until November, leading Ken Livingstone to dub it the 'Black History Season'.

The chances are that there will be something planned by your local libraries, museums, town halls and community centres – and the variety of programmes is a tribute to the organisers. They are putting together storytelling, walks, theatrical productions, comedies – and even a Black History Month Ball!

It might be about education – but it's also about entertainment and having fun. That, believe it or not, is what history is supposed to be about. The word comes from the French 'histoire' which means 'story'. And who doesn't like to be told a story?

But our intent is serious. We see this month as an opportunity to share with the world at large the incredible contribution black people have made to this planet. We want to encourage pride in our creativity, respect for our intellectual prowess and celebration of our skills and gifts. That's why we don't want anyone to think it is an event for black people. We want everyone involved: our African heritage should be shared by everyone as world history. To do that, it needs to be visible.

•For more information visit <http://www.black-history-month.co.uk> or see the award-winning publication Black History 365.

● HIGHLIGHTS NEXT MONTH INCLUDE

6 October

At an event organised by the British Caribbean Association, the late David Pitt will be remembered by eminent Jamaican psychiatrist Dr Aggrey Burke at the Greater London Authority's City Hall

20 October

British Library event remembering the uprisings of the 80s across the UK – and what has changed in those areas

30th October

Black Voluntary Sector celebrates Black History Month by bringing together groups, organisations and performers at the Millennium Centre in Cardiff



IT HAS been ten years since the Black Ethnic Minority Committee was established by the then General Secretary Mick Rix. As more and more unions, often with large memberships, were organizing their own committees, Mick wanted ASLEF to be a part of this, to have a voice and increase its own profile in the trade union movement. The TUC, and STUC Black Worker's Conference were in their infancy, but with a steadily increasing membership.

It was not about splitting from the TUC. It was about establishing our own forum. A place to debate and highlight issues that affect black and ethnic workers, both at work and in society.

The BEM gave us a voice and through our respective General Councils we hoped to implement policies that would bring about changes in employment law for the benefit of all workers.

As ethnic minority drivers we have seen changes not just in working practices but in people's attitudes toward us. Even since I became the first black driver in Scotland twenty years ago (before that I worked for 4 years as a secondman) I have seen enormous changes.

It's not very often that I thank political correctness but on this occasion I will. Language from the past in no longer tolerated. I have always enjoyed good working relationships with my fellow drivers in my district but one of the biggest changes has occurred in management. The days of sweeping a complaint under the carpet are long gone. We can now rely on their full support. I would like to think this is the same in every TOC.

I would like to remind you all that ASLEF is your union. This committee is your committee and we have come a long way.

During Black History Month I'd like you to spare a thought for black and ethnic members of the past, as well as current members.

Be proud to be a train driver and be proud to be a member of ASLEF.

18 years ago I met a man from South Africa. He asked what I did for a living. I told him I was a train driver. 'You mean they let black people drive trains in this country?' he replied, disbelieving.

'I proudly replied; Yes!'

Paul Patmore, BEM Committee Member, District 2

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THE LAW



- Out of 163 most senior judges sitting in the High Court only 3 are from a minority background.
- 4% of all judges are from a minority background.

THE MEDIA



- The Guardian's 'Media100' – a list of the top 100 people in the media industry – for 2009 showed only 2 people from an ethnic minority.
- The BBC's employees has 12.1%

from black or ethnic backgrounds. Of these, just 5.6% are senior management.

SPORT



- It is indicative of how black people have been portrayed that sport is seen as a 'natural' area for their talents – as opposed, for example, to the 'professions'.
- The number of black and ethnic professional footballers has increased from 12% to 25% since 2001.
- Of England's 23-man squad in the 2010 World Cup, eight were from a minority background

Pete Steers from footplate to floodlights

FOR his 13th birthday treat, Pete Steer's dad took him to Hammersmith Odeon to see a Gary Numan concert. 'I was knocked off my feet! Those synths and lights and the whole experience. I was swallowed up by it. All I wanted to do was be a musician, to be standing there – where my hero was standing. It was my dream.'

Twelve years later the dream came true. Peter led his band out onto that very stage. They had been chosen as the support group for that same Gary Numan.

'Isn't that amazing?' he asks with his customary enthusiasm and exuberance. 'That first concert changed me. It gave me a goal and a mission I've never abandoned. I set out to learn the guitar and the synth, and I'm still doing it. Music is a huge passion for me, the voice inside my mind.'

Pete's latest band – tenek, a duo of Pete and Geoff Pinckney – release their second album 'On The Wire' this month and he's regularly on



Pete in night-time mode, the broody muso!
Photo: Ed Fielding

tour, especially to Germany where the band is very highly rated. 'We play locally in Brighton now and then,' he says. 'Quite a few of the drivers come along. Of course, they take the mick – but then they would. They're train drivers!'

He puts up with quite a lot of cracks about a certain difference in appearance between the train driver crawling in for an early turn and the airbrushed star on tenek's album covers and the posters you see around the depot. 'It's a fair point,' he chuckles. 'But it's great that they come along and buy our records.'

Pete completes 24 years on the railways this month, having started as a driver's assistant at Norwood. Then the job took him to Euston for five years. 'I had to move on. I was too young for all those night shifts. They killed my social life!' he says. So he went to Chiltern at Marylebone and more recently to Brighton.

“ I'M GRATEFUL TO TRAIN DRIVING. IT GAVE ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO FOLLOW MY DREAM ”

He's shortly moving to Victoria because he's planning to live in Essex with his girlfriend.

'The job was very different when I began. I remember the people interviewing me almost trying to talk me out of it. They couldn't believe a kid with seven O Levels would want to be a driver.'

'I think my mum was disappointed as well – but my dad was over the moon! He worked for BT but he's a real train freak – he still works on the Bluebell and all our holidays when I was young involved a trip on a steam train somewhere.'

No one else in the family is musical but both Pete and his brother took to playing instruments like fish to water. 'My brother is a really talented bass player. He played on a track on our new album.'

Their dad said he'd put up half the money



'Day-time' Peter on the platform by the footplate. Colleagues think they spot a certain difference between this and his stage persona!

to buy instruments if they earned the rest. 'I don't know if he regrets it now! I was so driven I got jobs all over the place. I had money saved in no time.'

Not much was spent on lessons. 'It was all a bit formal for me. I preferred to pick it up. It means I can't read music – but then, neither can Paul McCartney and he's doing OK!'

tenek have a synth-led, electronic, funky-dance sound that still sounds human. 'We don't like to clean tracks up so they become too clean and sound like everyone else. We like to leave a few odd human noises around.'

This is the latest of a long list of bands he's played in during a career that's seen Pete support outfits like A Flock Of Seagulls, The Human League and John Foxx.

'Playing is sometimes tricky to fit in at work,' he admits. 'I have to make sure bookings don't clash with shifts or that someone will swap a turn with me. Yes, music is my passion, but driving is my job. I don't honestly think I'll find myself in a position to give up being a train driver. Besides, it's a good way to earn a living. Some mornings it's beautiful to be in the cab rolling through the countryside. It's a lot better

Would you be prepared to be featured in future editions of this column, or know someone who would be a good subject? If you do, please let us know at the ASLEF Journal, 9 Arkwright Road, London NW3 6AB or journal@aslef.org.uk

than the nine-to-five office job I was supposed to get with my O levels!

'And one thing I do use to the full is my rail passes. I'm lucky enough to have started in BR days, so my boxes are protected. It really is a bonus.'

Pete is something of a perfectionist, never satisfied with half doing things. When he played football, it was with one of the top Sunday-league sides. He gave that up a few years back when he found he 'hobbled until Thursday'. Easier, he says, was sorting out how to manage computers.

'You need to know them backwards to use them in our stage act and albums and to use as a tool to write songs. But it's also vital to get known. I spend hours doing 'viral promotion' on MySpace and FaceBook. And then there's emailing promo stuff, and sending our sounds out to magazines and radio stations.'

Because he uses up all his leave to suit the band he says he and his girlfriend have hardly managed to get away for any length of time together. But from what he reveals about other trips abroad, maybe that's no bad thing...

'I know this sounds perverse, but ... well, I'm really scared of heights. So what do I do? Every time I visit a city, I find the tallest building and go up it. Weird, eh? I've been up Sydney Harbour Bridge, the Eiffel Tower and on a recent tour with the band - to the top of Cologne cathedral.'

As he smiles at this eccentricity, Pete says how fortunate he has been to have a passion like music. 'I can't remember the last time I was bored.'

As if he wasn't busy enough, Pete also spent two years as an ASLEF local rep. 'It was a lot of hard work - and for little reward to be honest. I really admire the people who do that

The cover of tenek's most recent single – and don't forget their new album is out this month!



Cool setting for electronic sounds.
Photo: Ed Fielding

job. They don't get paid and they don't get thanked – but they know it's the right thing.

'All in all, I'm grateful to train driving. It's paid the bills while it gave me the opportunity to follow my dream.'

● To hear and see more about Pete's band, tenek, go to www.tenek.info or www.myspace.com/tenekuk

● The band's new album 'On The Wire' is available in download form in i-tunes at Amazon and other major download stores. You can get CDs in specialist alternative shops or online at the album label www.toffeetonesrecords.com



The duo that is tenek – Pete Steer and Geoff Pinckney. Photo: Ed Fielding

WHAT THE UNION WAS DOING 100 AND 50 YEARS AGO

100 years ago reckless speeding in cars – over 20 mph – was an issue - while **50 years ago** rents had rocketed to **£1.75 a week!**

100 YEARS AGO

In the September 1910 Journal, 'Nota Bene' was concerned with speeding in cars ...

"Mr. Winston Churchill's suggested reforms in regard to the payment of Police Court fines will remove many a hardship. Fines are imposed which the magistrates know well enough cannot be paid, and so the defendants have to go to prison. It is suggested, therefore, that time should be given them in which to find the money.

The magistrates, in fact, already have the power to give grace, as instanced by a recent case at Wimbledon, when a chauffeur was fined for exceeding the speed limit where a ten miles an hour rate was in force.

In the end, the defendant was granted a

month's grace to enable him to pay the fine and costs. At the same time, it must be said that this thoughtless driving of motor cars is a very serious offence. To go spinning at 22 miles an hour along a busy thoroughfare is no joke, and as for making criminals of those who err in this way, well, there is always a good chance of making corpses of others who offend by getting in the way."

50 YEARS AGO

The September 1960 edition reported on a familiar theme – governments finding economic crises the moment they are elected ...

"Opening for the Opposition in the Economic debate, Mr. Harold Wilson pointed

out that, "Once again, within a few months of a General Election which was fought on prosperity, the magic has gone and we have to face economic realities." The various measures which have been taken since the election were, he said, "sickeningly familiar".

".....Mr George Brown, who wound up for the Opposition, was concerned about the way in which the Government's economic policies affected the lives of the British people. He gave the following instance of the way in which the Tories' dear money policy affected housing: "In 1951 the economic rent for a local authority house at the then average tender of £1,400 was £19s 4d a week. In 1959 the economic rent for a house at the average tender figure of £1,500 was 34s.3d. a week, an increase of nearly 80 per cent."

● **Extracts selected and edited by Jane Pimlott**

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AA For the road ahead

DRIVER ALISTAIR WARREN, A TRAGIC LOSS

IT IS with much regret that the Drivers at Aylesbury have received the sad news that one of their colleagues, Alistair Warren - affectionately known as Ali - has passed away at the age of 46. The news came as a shock to everyone. It is less than a year ago that I was proud to present Ali with his 5-year ASLEF badge.

I know he will be sadly missed by everyone at Aylesbury and across Chiltern Railways and of course by his two children he leaves behind. Farewell dear friend.

Jim Gillard, Secretary, Aylesbury Branch



Ali receiving his ASLEF badge from Jim Gillard



Great loss, too young

ANDREW VAUGHAN, LEFT US AT 51 YEARS

IT IS with great sadness that I inform you of the death of a great friend and colleague Andrew Vaughan, who sadly passed away on 4 June following a long fight with oesophagus cancer.

Andy was only 51 and leaves a wife, son and daughter. He was a very popular guy who you could always rely on to put a smile on your face. It was a terrible shock to his family and friends when he was diagnosed back in December. Even at times when he was going through severe pain and suffering, right to the very end he would always find a one-liner with his trademark dry humour.

His work colleagues gave him a fabulous send off as they lined the road to the crematorium. The union made a nationwide branch collection which raised a staggering £2,740 which was presented to his wife Caroline. She was completely overwhelmed by your generosity and asked me to pass on her thanks for all the support and kind words that people have shown during this terrible time.

Andrew will be greatly missed by all his friends at Upminster

Christopher Pirie, Industrial Relations Representative, Upminster

BILL 'GUNNER' JAMES, A FINAL RUN

Bill ('Gunner') James, formerly of Old Oak Common has died. Gunner was born in 1921 and started work as a cleaner at Swansea Victoria Paxton Street in 1935. He then did his National Service (and hence the nickname) before moving to Old Oak Common where he retired in 1985. One of his proudest moments was in 1985 when he took part in a record-breaking journey as the driver of a HST from Paddington to Cardiff.

Gunner's last request was to have his ashes returned to Swansea in the front cab of a HST. His family contacted retired ex-Old Oak Common and Eurostar driver Peter Story who contacted me. When I put the request to FGW management they were happy to go along with Gunner's wishes.

On behalf of Gunner's daughter Margaret and myself I would like to thank John Allan (management), Bob Long (Paddington to Swindon driver), D.C. Jones (Swindon to Swansea driver) and Brian Jones, the Swansea staff rep.

Bob Morse, RMS

TONBRIDGE MOURN THREE

I HAVE the sad job of reporting the passing of three Tonbridge drivers.

Bill Ford was 86 when he died having spent much of his retirement in Bournemouth. He started his railway career at Tunbridge Wells West before coming to Tonbridge in the early 60s. He was a well-respected man and a real character.

Bill Foard is another driver I am sorry to say has passed away. Bill started at Tonbridge but moved to Caterham for his driving job. After working at various other depots he ended his career at Tonbridge. He loved a game of golf, but he was also always ready to give you a tune on his mouth organ. Bill will be

sadly missed, and our thoughts are with his family at this time.

Finally **Neil Scott** has died after having bravely fought cancer for two years. He was a lovely man, unable to fault - and for him to leave us at the age of just 52 is terrible. Our thoughts are with his family at this very sad time.

D. A. Weddle, Reporter, Tonbridge RMS

BRIAN RICHARD BROOKS, A PLEASURE TO WORK WITH



BRIAN RICHARD BROOKS (BRB for short) was born in Haringey on 2 April 1945 and died in the Isobel Hospice on 31 March 2010. Brian started on the railway at Hornsey, moved to Kings Cross, went to Enfield Town for his driving position,

then moved to Hertford East and on its closure moved to St Pancras again, and finally to Kings Cross.

Like many others he left when they privatised the railway and with his wife Josie, moved to Yorkshire where they settled and began to enjoy life. Unfortunately Josie died eight years ago and around Christmas 2009 Brian was diagnosed with cancer. His children brought him back to Hertford where they could keep an eye on him.

At his funeral his daughter Jenny spoke of her heartfelt loss of a 'great dad who was always there for them'. Brian loved a game of darts and all his friends and colleagues remember a great chap who was a pleasure to work with. They demonstrated this on 19 April 2010 by packing the chapel where the lives of Brian and Josie were celebrated. To his children Jenny and Leanne, and all his grandchildren and great-grandchildren and all his friends and relations, we send our condolences..

Peter Smith, Reporter, Kings Cross branch

REGINALD DESMOND SPELLER, STRATFORD TO GIDEA PARK

I AM writing to inform you that Reg, as he was known to his colleagues, recently passed away in Basildon Hospital aged 83.

Reg started his footplate career at Stratford Depot aged 15 and later transferred to Gidea Park until retirement.

Thomas Crow, Retired Members Section

Basingstoke presentations

I WAS honoured to make the presentations at the Basingstoke Branch Retirement function in July. The three members retiring – brothers Tony Cordery, Bob Shelbourne and Derek Hatton – all started in the 60's and worked on steam, diesels and electric locomotives. I had the pleasure of working with them when we were just teenagers on the railway. Now they have a combined service of over 140 years.

The Social Committee organised a fantastic evening and each retiring member was presented with an ASLEF retirement certificate and a copy of a newspaper printed on the day they started on the railway – while their wives received flowers and a £50

shopping voucher.

After the main presentations, I was very proud to present Bro Bob Shelbourne with his 50 years ASLEF medallion, on behalf of the General Secretary.

I then presented long service badges to Bros John Abbott (35years) Pete Vernon (35 years) and Kevin Odell (30 years). Kevin and I recalled the day I gave him the Society application form!

It was a splendid evening of good food, drink and chat with over 40 other retired members. Thanks to the branch and the Social Committee for a fantastic evening.

Jim Rowe, Retired Member, now living in France



It's presentation time for Tony Cordery ...



... for Bob Shelbourne



... and Derek Hatton



... while retired member Paul Dalglish gets a home visit with his certificate!

Upcoming events

CRICKLEWOOD REUNION

The next Cricklewood reunion will be at the RAFA Club in Ashburnham Road, Bedford on Friday 15 October from 11.30 onwards. For more information contact either Grahame Nash (Bristol) or Bob Hodson (Wolverhampton).

COMPANY NEWS

COMPANY COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Bro J Davidson, Rugby Branch - Freightliner Heavy Haul Local Council - Constituency South 2. Bro S Newton, Exeter Branch - First Great Western Company Council - Constituency 2. Bro N Craven, Leeds Branch - East Coast Company Council Representative - Leeds Constituency. Bro H Kaye, Kings Cross Branch - East Coast Company Council Representative - Kings Cross Constituency. Bro J R Housley, Doncaster Branch - East Coast Company Council Representative - Doncaster Constituency.

SOUTHERN SHUNTERS PAY

The EC accepted a pay offer for 2010 of 3.7% for Southern Shunter drivers.

REST DAY WORKING

ASLEF is prepared to sanction Rest Day Working on London Midland until 25th September 2010

ASLEF was represented at a service held at St Peters Mancroft church in Norwich on 9 July to commemorate victims of the first air raid on the city 70 years previously. The memorial service was held in large part thanks to research carried out by retired railworker Norman Bacon.

On this date in 1940 an attack took place without warning just as factory workers were making their way home. The bombs hit Barnards Foundry, Bolton Paul's factory and Colman's Food factory as well as the railway and workshops. 12 railways employees were among the 350 who died on that day



ASLEF's John Pipe and Peter Smith are on the left of this picture along with the Rev Janet Wyer and Norwich Lord Mayor, Tom Dylan

or in the subsequent raids, along with many workers from the Colman's factory.

I am pleased to say there was a good turn out of people from Norwich and others who had travelled to be there. Some had actually been present and witnessed the demise of their friends and colleagues 70 years ago.

I'd like to offer my thanks both to those who attended, including ASLEF RMS member Eddie Hitchcox who relieved me of my camera so I could be in the picture!

There is an exhibition honouring the Colman girls at the Mustard shop in the city's Royal Arcade.

Peter Smith, Reporter, RMS

King's Cross results: retirements 7, long service 4

A FUNCTION at Kings Cross last month was marked by the presence of seven retirements and the presentation of four long-service medals. Those retiring were

John Rimington

John started on the railway in August 1962 at King's Cross Top Shed as an Engine Cleaner, remaining at the depot as he passed through the ranks.

John, who retired in July has been a loyal and active member all his working life. He was a local rep for three years before going on to spend many years on the branch committee including five as branch chairman.

Roy Green

Roy started in March 1962 at Boston and arrived at Kings Cross six years later – by way of Fordingham and Hornsey. Along with his ASLEF retirement certificate Roy was also presented with a 45 year long-service badge.

Alan J. Smith ('A J')

Alan started at Hatfield on the 11th of April 1960 as an Engine Cleaner. Alan was made redundant at Hatfield and moved to Hornsey in 1962. Alan passed out for driving and then went back to Hatfield. Alan was again made redundant in 1968 and then came to King's Cross.

Andy Keogh

Andy, who started at King's Cross in 1976 as a guard, passed out for driving in 1992.

Rick Bullimore

Rick came to us by a slightly different route. He spent 24 years in the Royal Air Force as an Aircraft Radar Technician before getting a 'proper job' as a train driver at Kings Cross in 2002! Sadly he had to retire early because of ill health. It's typical (Sod's Law) that his transfer to Peterborough came through just after his ill health resettlement.

Tony Atkin

Tony started as a Messenger Boy at New England Yard Master's Office in September 1959 then went as a Telegraph Boy to Crescent Junction at Peterborough. He came onto the footplate as an Engine Cleaner at



Kings Crossers all! Back row (left to right) Bill Bennett, Alan Smith, John Rimington, Roy Green and District 5 Organiser Andy Morrison. Front row Paul Begley, Andy Keogh, District 5 EC member Nigel Gibson, John Goulding, Tony Atkin and KX Branch Secretary Les Muir.

New England. He passed out for driving at Kings Cross before picking up a driving job at Selhurst. His final move was back to Kings Cross in 1973, from where he retired in September 2009.

John Goulding

John, known all along the East Coast Main Line as 'Goldy', started at King's Cross Top Shed on 23 May 1962 as an Engine Cleaner - and was nearly sacked on his first day! He went through the links and in 1974 passed as both fireman and driver. But there's much more to John than these cold facts. He has the world record for having the most plastic bags in a mess room, for the number of bardic lamps lost in a career and the most lost mobile phones since they became part of a driver's equipment. He's a fine character and a truly great person.

The four Long Service Awards went to Paul Begley and Bill Bennett (50 years medallion), John O'Brien (15 and 20 year badges) and Jim Bull (35 year badge).

Finally thanks to Les Muir for providing the background for these 'pedigrees'.

Peter Smith, Reporter, Retired Members' Section

I HAD the pleasure of spending the first day of July at the 2010 Tonbridge Reunion. We had a good crowd on a fine day and it was especially pleasing because we thought last year's event would be the last. Tony Holland had not been well and there were no willing volunteers to take on the arrangements. When the Legion heard of this, they took on the job on our behalf – and what a good job they made of it! Many thanks to them - and to the lads who parted with their cash to have a flutter on the raffle!

Finally don't forget the reunion to be held in Rainham on 7 October – and please support the raffles and ensure funding for these occasions.

Peter Smith, Reporter, RMS

Legions attend Tonbridge reunion



Over the garden wall the Tonbridge Class of 2010!



These are the pages where you talk to us. We welcome your letters, either by mail to the **ASLEF Journal at 9 Arkwright Road London NW3 6AB** or by email to **journal@aslef.org.uk**. Because of our space constraints, please try to keep your contributions as short as you can. This month we continue our **STAR LETTER feature**. The immensely lucky winner will pocket a rich range of ASLEF regalia!

The devil you know

IT WAS good that a healthy debate took place at the AAD over the union's continued blind faith in New Labour. Ordinary members' patience is wearing thin on our financial backing of this party.

After 13 years in power the legacy of New Labour was high unemployment, massive wealth gaps between rich and poor, more privatisations, chaos in health and education and stronger anti-union legislation. Our industry became even more fragmented, and the promised re-nationalisation never took place. The fact that our own union financially supports this party is hardly something to be proud of.

The arguments about 'better the devil you know' or 'let's change the party from within' don't wash anymore. The current Labour leadership (non) debate is devoid of any hint of policy changes that would benefit the average ASLEF member. It's continued Tory policies by whoever wins the leadership election.

I appreciate the historical links between our union and the Labour Party, and there was a time ASLEF could influence political decisions through its political affiliation, but those days went when Labour's traditional principles were abandoned.

When will our leaders admit that it's unsavable as a party, and invest our political funds on policies and campaigns that reflect the political aspirations of its members, and not as a blank cheque for New Labour to implement quasi-Tory policies?

John Metcalfe, Carlisle

The best for ASLEF

PLEASE may I take the opportunity to thank all those friends and colleagues both in District No 6 and elsewhere that offered their best wishes and support to my family and me?

Most importantly all those branches that nominated me to continue in the role of District Organiser, EC No6 Dave Calfe all the branch secretary's, representatives and members whose efforts and teamwork make us successful.

It has always remained a privilege to be elected or endorsed by one's peers and I undertake to continue to do my best for

PROUD TRADE UNIONIST, NOT SELFISH ELITIST!

I READ Keith Norman's column in the August Journal with a chuckle. It talked about the RMT notifying our general secretary that the recent RMT conference had decided that there should only be one union in the railway industry.

This is yet more evidence of how desperate the RMT is to acquire sole recognition to represent the driving grade.

At my depot, Manchester Victoria, RMT activists repeatedly attempt to undermine any progress ASLEF makes for the drivers we represent. They spread gossip, rumours and even occasionally documents – which all show they have little understanding of the issues. They even attempted this during our recent productivity deal –

even though the RMT had no involvement in either the negotiations or the subsequent ballot!

Did the RMT really think that if they turned up at Arkwright Road waving their conference resolution, Keith Norman would disband our union and advise our drivers to join the RMT? It's obvious to me that although our union is relatively small, it is gazed upon with envy because of our power and influence in the rail industry.

When I think of the recent widely-reported incident at a football match where Bob Crow's conduct led to ugly scenes, I begin to chuckle even more.

But then again, according to the RMT, I'm just a selfish elitist!

**Steve Hill,
Newton Heath**

**ASLEF and its members.
Mick Whelan, District Organiser**

Thanks, Nigel

EARLIER this year I was involved in a serious operational incident carrying out a shunt move within depot limits. Despite working under the authority of a shunter, and working to his instructions, it was deemed appropriate that I be charged under the disciplinary procedure for my part in the incident. At the hearing it was decided that I receive a Severe Reprimand, which obviously would affect my operational integrity and compromise my safety related profile.

I was represented at my appeal by ASLEF company councillor Nigel Cummins. The very compelling case presented by Nigel resulted in the charge being withdrawn. Despite Nigel's humble opinion that he was merely doing his job, I would like to thank him publicly for his

meticulous preparation, painstaking attention to detail and extremely thorough approach.

Russell Eaton, Driver, Bournemouth

29 years - and no facilities

I'VE just been reading about 'two tier travel facilities' in the latest Loco Journal.

Personally, as a Direct Rail Services (DRS) member, I wouldn't mind any tier at all!

As the Executive Committee (EC) knows, we have absolutely no facilities. As a railwayman with 29 years service, I find this grossly unfair.

DRS promised many of us travel facilities when we joined – and we're still waiting. Quarter fares would be better than nothing at all. DRS has contacted ATOC – but they will not even recognise the company. Any pressure the Union could apply would be most welcome.

I really hope the EC will take up this

issue. As a minimum I believe anyone travelling to and from work should have a basic pass entitling them to free travel. This cost is significant for many of us.
Mark Baker, Driver, DRS Crewe

Joined up rail?

I AM a freight driver and I work for DB Schenker. We often work trains to and from Acton to Nottingham which necessitates us going through the London Underground to get to and from Acton. We normally have company-issued Oyster Cards which are supposed to top up automatically.

A few months back I was travelling to Acton and I had just got off an East Midlands train at St Pancras. I got to the ticket barriers at the Underground station as you go into the Circle/Metropolitan line at St Pancras. For some reason my Oyster card would not let me in. One of the two barrier staff told me to try another gate - which still didn't work.

The staff member then got very rude and aggressive and asked why I was using an Oyster card with nothing on it. I told them it was a company card so I had no idea there was nothing on it. He then told me to go to the ticket office but when I saw the large queue of people I said that I wasn't going to queue up. He could see that I was train crew - unless of course he didn't know what EWS stood for.

He then told me to give him the card. Not wanting to cause a scene and as I was in

ALMOST £5,700 RAISED FOR CANCER CHARITY

IN July I cycled from John O'Groats to Lands End in aid of Cancer Research UK. I did this in memory of my mum-in-law who passed away last year. She was married to Cliff Pattenden, a retired Three Bridges driver who was my Driving Instructor.

My work colleagues were very generous and when ASLEF very kindly put out a national appeal, branches donated a further £295. Without Giftaid we have now raised £4,860 (our target was £1500!). With Giftaid it will be nearer £5700!

Many thanks to you all for your



Kevin cycling for groats – well, in fact, pounds!

remarkable generosity. If you are interested, there are some pictures of my journey on-line at www.kevsjogle.com. Kevin Shepherd, Horsham

railway clothes, I gave it him. He confiscated it and refused to let me through! Luckily I had an old paper ticket which the company used to issue us with and I used that. He even challenged me and asked me if I wasn't going to 'do anything about it' as if he was looking for a fight. I just said no and walked off. Unfortunately I didn't get his name. I couldn't believe his aggressiveness. He didn't even treat me like a customer, which I was of course.

So obviously the fact that we might be train drivers or indeed other rail staff means nothing these days - and he seemed to think freight drivers were the lowest of the low. Not only do I (and all those other freight drivers who started in the last eight years or so) not get any concessionary travel at all when I'm not working, I now also get abuse when I am working. I can't win really.

Peter McGrady, Driver, DBS

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

To advertise in the ASLEF Journal please contact Sarah Francis on 020 7317 8600 or sfrancis@aslef.org.uk



Faversham Branch (077) has finally launched its 25th Anniversary ASLEF/NUM badge. They cost £10 each including P&P. A few Faversham Branch

Centenary badges remain available at £5 each including P&P. To order please contact the Branch Secretary, Steve Gurdler, 18 Hunters Way West, Chatham, Kent ME5 7HL. steve.gurdler@aslefonline.co.uk or 07941 110473



BRIGHTON ASLEF DRIVERS BADGE. Limited Edition of 300. All profits to fund branch reunions. Available for £10 including p&p (cheques made payable to 'ASLEF Brighton Branch No 35') from Mark Johnson, 51 Drove Road, Portslade, Brighton BN41 2PA or phone 07783 847228.



WORLD CUP 2010 BADGE SET Limited edition (200) badge set, 8 badges in each box set, one per group, individually numbered, beautifully presented. £20 plus £2 RECORDED DELIVERY POST to ASLEF members. Cheques payable to M. Scott at 1 Tamerton Square, Woking, Surrey, GU22 7SZ.

Paypal and email enquiries to scottfootball@hotmail.com Mobile 07718 131622



CITY OF LONDON BADGES, one 10-year and one depot badge. Depot badges are numbered 1-150. There are only 150 of each. Price £5 plus £1 p&p. All profits to City of London branch funds to acquire a branch banner.

Further information or orders to Colin Dawson 01689 849 543 or 22 Hutchison Road, New Addington, Croydon, Surrey CR0 0BD.

KENT AREA NUM-MARYLEBONE ASLEF 25TH ANNIVERSARY (1984-2009) BADGES £5 each plus £1 p&p. Last ten available. All proceeds to Justice for Miners. Contact L. French at 55 Mill Road, Gillingham, Kent, ME7 1HW or phone 01634 576058 for details.

DRIVER COLLECTS BR33056 SERIES TRAINCREW / DRIVER MANUALS. Contact Lee on 07919127972 or e-mail lippydavies@blueyonder.co.uk



NXEA 2009 STRIKE BADGE commemorating solidarity of ASLEF members. Purchase (£3 plus p&p) from NXEA Branch Secretary or District Council 5 Secretary. Contact M Steele on 07788 153954, 1 Rosecroft, South Wootton, Kings Lynn Norfolk PE30 3WX. Proceeds to District Council 5 Education Fund and ASLEF Fighting Fund.

ASLEF TRAIN DRIVER collects ASLEF/railway badges, signs, shed plates, signalling items, etc. Phone Mark on 01562 746537 or (mobile) 07789301551

Railway Children pull into Waterloo Station

Alf Martin reviews a classic story brought to life in spectacular setting with a real train as the star ...

O LD Will Shakespeare's phrase All The World's A Stage from As You Like It gets a new meaning with Damien Cruden's critically acclaimed stage production of *The Railway Children* which has extended its run at the former Eurostar terminal at London's Waterloo Station until 2 January 2011.

It opened to packed houses in July for a short run in a 1,000 seat auditorium specially created with the audience seated on the platforms either side of the railway track.

The *Railway Children*, which uses the old Gentleman's saloon carriage from the 1970 classic film version, also features *Stirling Single No.1*, a period steam train from the National Railway Museum in York where the production was first seen in 2008.

Built in 1870 and designed by Patrick Stirling, the chief mechanical engineer of the Great Northern Railway, the locomotive is characterised by a single pair of 8 foot 1 inch driving wheels. It weighs 66 tonnes and was built in Doncaster works, the same workshop

that built the *Flying Scotsman*. *Stirling Silver* is the only Great Northern Railway G Class locomotive to have been preserved and is part of the National Collection cared for by the National Railway Museum.

The *Railway Children* tells the story of Bobby, Peter and Phyllis, three children whose lives change dramatically when their father is mysteriously taken away. They move from London to a cottage in rural Yorkshire with their mother where they befriend the local railway porter and embark on a magical journey of discovery, friendship and adventure. But the mystery remains – where is father, is he ever coming back?

Sarah Quintrall and Louisa Clein are excellent as the responsible Bobby and mischievous Phyllis, remembering their childhood, and Marshall Lancaster makes a fine stationmaster, Mr Perks.

Every performance, sympathetically adapted by Mike Kenny from E. Nesbit's classic 1906 novel, is in support of the Railway Children Charity which helps homeless and runaway children throughout the world.

- For times and ticket prices please visit www.railwaychildrenwaterloo.com
- For more information about the work of The Railway Children's charity please visit www.railwaychildren.org.uk



Stirling Single No.1, a period steam train from the National Railway Museum in York



Action from the critically acclaimed stage production of *The Railway Children*



Louisa Clein (Phyllis), Nicholas Bishop (Peter) and Sarah Quintrell (Roberta)



Marshall Lancaster (Mr Perks) Photos by Simon Annand

Prize Crossword No. 53 set by TLC



Solution to Crossword No 52 which appeared in the August edition of the ASLEF Journal. Congratulations to **Mrs J Darwin** from **Chesterfield, Derbyshire**

ACROSS 1 Light Railway 7 Drier 8 Placard 11 Seethed 12 Nairobi 13 Rests 14 Emergency 16 Digressed 19 Aster 21 Inferno 23 Retuned 24 Elevate 25 Naevi 26 Book a Sleeper

DOWN 1 Ladders 2 Geishas 3 Tiredness 4 Aspen 5 Leaning 6 Measured Mile 9 Acorn 10 Dairy Produce 15 Endurance 17 Gaffe 18 Earmark 19 Antwerp 20 Tangier 22 Opens

CLUES ACROSS

1. London Station (5,7)
B South American dance (5)
8. Not active, hibernating (7)
11. Place where actors 'strut their stuff'! (7)
12. Russian Empress (7)
13. Watering hole in the desert (5)
14. Intermediary (9)
16. Native of the West of a region (9)
19. Clear away the spillage (3,2)
21. One who lubricates (7)
23. Chivalrous (7)
24. Cash for a rainy day (4-3)

25. Large bowl (5)

26. One in deep repose (5,7)

CLUES DOWN

1. Small sealed bags or packets (7)
2. Sets fire to something (7)
3. Person engaged in a trade or profession (9)
4. Inspect the accounts (5)
5. Place a restriction on something (7)
6. Estate car (7,6)
9. An accepted statement or proposition (5)
10. Railway enthusiast (5,7)
15. Navigable airship (9)
17. Large buildings

housing stock or machinery (5)

18. Oriental (7)

19. Weak or effeminate man (4,3)

20. Organizer (7)

22. Expresses uncontrollable anger (5)



MARKS & SPENCER

The winner of this month's crossword will receive Marks & Spencer vouchers to the value of £25

Name.....
Address.....
.....Postcode.....

Thanks for all your responses to the 52nd ASLEF crossword in the August edition. If you complete this month's crossword please send the solution to the Editor, ASLEF Journal, 9 Arkwright Road, London NW3 6AB by the 14th of the issue month.

ASLEF'S legal services – your rights for their wrongs!

FREE LEGAL ADVICE ASLEF also provides first class free legal advice – both for members and for their dependents. During 2009 ASLEF recovered £1,946,190.45 in damages for all types of cases. Call the helpline on 0808 100 8009

EMERGENCIES If you are an ASLEF member who is arrested or being interviewed by the police and need legal assistance – day or night – you can call the members' Emergency Hotline on 0800 587 7530.

SACKINGS OR OTHER PROBLEMS AT WORK Harassment, discrimination or bullying? If your local, branch or district representative is unavailable, call the Industrial Relations department at union headquarters (020 7317 8600) or email info@aslef.org.uk

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